Waste-to-energy auction planned for next year

THE Department of Energy (DoE) said it will launch a green energy auction (GEA) next year dedicated for waste-to-energy (WTE) projects sourcing feedstock from urban areas.

In a statement on Thursday, the DoE said it will issue the notice of auction and terms of reference within the month. The auction proper is expected to take place in January.

WTE projects resulting from the auction are targeted for completion by the fourth quarter of 2027.

Citing the 2024 Solid Waste Generation data of the National Solid Waste Management Commission, the DoE said Metro Manila and highly urbanized cities (HUCs) generate an estimated 6.12 million metric tons of municipal solid waste, which could be converted into 335 megawatts of baseload power.

A new auction round for biomass and WTE projects will be conducted by the second quarter of 2026, it said.

WTE is the process of converting non-recyclable waste materials into usable heat, electricity, or fuel using various technologies.

"As an emerging renewable energy technology, WTE project development is one of the country's strategies to address solid waste management, serve as flood control mitigation, and provide additional clean energy," the DoE said.

The GEA program aims to promote renewable energy as one of the country's primary sources of energy through competitive selection.

The DoE said that the latest auction is aligned with the Philippines renewable energy targets of 35% in the power mix by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

"The integration of WTE projects into the GEA framework underscores the DoE's commitment to ensuring energy security, environmental protection, and private sector participation in the country's transitioning to clean and sustainable energy," it said.

So far, the government has launched five auctions covering various renewable energy technologies, promising 20 GW of additional capacity. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Cement makers seek P600 safeguard duty on imports

FREEPIK

THE Cement Manufacturers' Association of the Philippines (CeMAP) said it is seeking an increase in the safeguard duty for cement imports to P600 per ton.

"We are happy that the Tariff Commission recognized the injury to the domestic industry. But we will be more than happy if they can grant our prayer," Renato A. Baja, executive director of CeMAP, told reporters on Thursday.

He said the industry group is seeking a safeguard duty of P600 per ton, against the P349 duty recommended by the Tariff Commission.

"Well… it is not enough," he said, adding that the P600 request more closely reflects the actual injury done to the industry.

According to CeMAP, the basis for the P349 duty is the difference between the factory gate price for cement, which was adjusted to compete with imported cement prices, and the landed price for imported cement.

"We can live with our prayers of our P600 per ton. We can survive with that," he added.

The Tariff Commission had imposed the P349 duty on imports of ordinary Portland cement type 1 and blended cement.

Mr. Baja said the volume of imported cement must be reduced to preserve the market share of domestic manufacturers.

He said manufacturers have surplus capacity of about 30%, indicating that Philippine cement makers can service domestic demand.

He said that since the provisional safeguard duties were put in place, imports have declined 19%.

In February, the Department of Trade and Industry ordered provisional safeguard duties of P400 per metric ton or P16 per 40-kilogram bag in the form of a cash bond on imports of ordinary Portland cement and blended cement. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Negative list overhaul urged to expand foreign role in infra projects

THE PHILIPPINES should consider relaxing its restrictions on foreign participation in infrastructure procurement to attract more private sector financing, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said.

In a report, "Addressing Legal and Regulatory Barriers to Quality Infrastructure Investment in India, Indonesia and the Philippines," the OECD recommended that the Philippine government revisit its Foreign Investment Negative List (FINL), which outlines the industries where foreign investment is restricted due to national security, public safety, and public health concerns.

"The government may wish to reconsider the limitations included in the Foreign Investment Negative List relating to infrastructure procurement projects," it said on Oct. 7.

"This could encourage more foreign private sector involvement in infrastructure financing in the Philippines, in line with (Quality Infrastructure Investment) QII Principle 2 on raising economic efficiency to ensure value for money over the project life cycle," it said.

The OECD noted that in List A of the FINL, foreign investors are restricted to 40% ownership in infrastructure projects, private land, or public utilities, in compliance with its constitution.

It also noted the restrictions on joint ventures formed by two or more foreign entities, which require that at least 75% of the ownership be held by a Filipino person or entity.

Republic Act No. 12252, signed in September, now allows foreigners to lease land in the Philippines for up to 99 years.

"Leased land, especially for agricultural purposes, faces additional restrictions under the comprehensive agrarian reform law. Local government regulations, such as permits for agricultural land reclassification, further influence land use," the OECD said.

"These constraints apply across all sectors, so even industries open to 100% foreign ownership under the Public Service Act must consider land-related limitations in infrastructure projects."

The OECD said that although some reforms are in progress, the Philippines still faces challenges in land acquisition for infrastructure projects, including right-of-way acquisition, fair market value appraisals involving multiple entities, and time-consuming land conversion procedures.

The organization also recommended that feasibility studies should assess risks related to Indigenous Peoples' land rights, highlighting the need for inclusiveness and respect for human rights. — **Aubrey Rose A. Inosante**

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DA lifts ban on imports of live poultry from six countries

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it lifted a poultry import ban imposed on Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, and the Malaysian states of Kelantan and Sabah.

It said the Bureau of Animal Industry declared it safe to allow imports again after all six countries reported no new cases of bird flu.

The ban had covered live domestic birds and wild birds.

The World Organisation for Animal Health estimates the bird flu incubation period at 2-5 days on average, and monitors outbreak sites for new cases before clearing that country's poultry industry. — **Andre Christopher H. Alampay**